



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

CLOSEOUT MEMORANDUM

Case Number: A13060071

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OIG received an allegation that the subject¹ (the author of a paper) is part of a conspiracy to willfully suppress another researcher's² theory. Having become aware of the researcher's theory, the subject wrote a review of it, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and criticizing the researcher's approach to science. Later the subject became convinced the researcher's theory was not viable. Subsequently, the subject published a paper³ that did not mention or reference the researcher's theory. The gist of the allegation is that because the subject was aware of the researcher's theory, the subject was obligated to reference it in his paper, and the subject's failure to do so constitutes omission and suppression of results, which would allegedly constitute research misconduct under NSF's regulation. Other allegations were also made against the subject, as well as against the journal that published the subject's paper, but those complaints have no NSF nexus; hence, we have no jurisdiction.

The subject is not obligated to discuss or reference others' theories in his papers, particularly if the subject has concluded such a theory is not viable. The researcher is free to discuss his theory in his own papers if he wishes it to be part of the scientific record. OIG concludes the researcher and subject have a difference of opinion about the viability of the researcher's theory, and the subject's failure to include in his paper a theory he considers non-viable is not research misconduct. Accordingly, this case is closed with no further action taken.

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